



## INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR

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| Class: IX | QUESTION BANK (2025-2026)<br><b>TOPIC: THE SOLITARY REAPER</b> | <b>SUBJECT: ENGLISH</b> |
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### *THE SOLITARY REAPER*

## About William Wordsworth

William Wordsworth is one of the most important English poets and a founder of the Romantic Movement of English literature, a style of writing that focuses on emotion and imagination. Wordsworth became known as a Lakeland Poet because of the area where he lived, which is renowned for its beautiful, wild landscapes, charming pastures, and countless lakes. He was often called a nature poet because of his emphasis on the connection between humans and the natural world.

## Summary

Look at her, alone in the field, that Scottish Girl by herself over there. She is cutting the grain and singing to herself. Stop and listen to her or walk on quietly. She cuts and gathers the grain and sings a sad song. Listen: the deep valley is overflowing with her music.

No nightingale ever sang more soothing notes to tired groups of travelers as they rested at an oasis in the Arabian desert. The cuckoo-bird never sang with such an affecting voice in the spring, breaking the ocean's silence around the Scottish isles.

Won't anyone tell me what her song is about? Maybe she sings so sadly for old tragedies and ancient battles. Or maybe the song is humbler, about everyday things—the pains and sorrows that everyone endures.

Whatever she was singing about, the young woman sang as though her song would never end. I saw her singing while she worked, bending over to cut the wheat with a sickle. I listened to her without moving. And as I walked on, up a hill, I carried her music in my heart: and I still do, long after I stopped hearing it.

## Poetic Devices

- **Imagery**- Reaping, up the hills, vale profound, Arabian Sands, Highland lass...
- **Rhyme** scheme ababccdd – end rhyme- profound / sound, still/hill, lay/day, grain/ strain.
- **Similie**- Nightingale, Cuckoo... could also be an Hyperbole as it is exaggerated.
- **Alliteration**- No nightingale, Among Arabian Sands

**On the basis of your understanding of the poem, answer the following MCQ questions.**

1. The central idea of the poem 'The Solitary Reaper' is \_\_\_\_\_ .

- a) songs give us happiness
- b) melodious sounds appeal to all
- c) beautiful experiences give us life-long pleasure
- d) reapers can sing like birds

**Ans. C) beautiful experiences give us life-long pleasure**

2. In the poem 'The Solitary Reaper' to whom does the poet say, ' Stop here or gently pass'?

- a) to the people cutting corn
- b) to himself
- c) to the people who make noise
- d) to all the passers by

**Ans. d) to all the passers by**

3. 'The Solitary Reaper' is a narrative poem set to music. This form of verse is called a \_\_\_\_\_ .

- a) ballad
- b) soliloquy
- c) monologue
- d) sonnet

**Ans. a) ballad**

4. The poet's lament in the poem 'The Solitary Reaper' is that \_\_\_\_\_ .

- (a) he cannot understand the song
- (b) he did not know the lass
- (c) she stopped singing at once
- (d) he had to move away

**Ans. (a) he cannot understand the song**

5. Why does the poet feel that the reaper was most likely singing sorrowful songs?

- (a) The poet himself was sad
- (b) The tune was melancholic
- (c) The surrounding was dismal
- (d) The reaper was weeping

**Ans. (b) The tune was melancholic**

**6. Read the given stanzas and answer the questions given below by selecting the correct option.**

*Alone she cuts and binds the grain,  
And sings a melancholy strain;  
O listen! for the Vale profound  
Is overflowing with the sound.*

**a) The exclamation mark used in O listen! suggests**

- A. a call for attention.
- B. a request to listen.
- C. a sense of wonder.
- D. a warning to alert.

**Ans. A. a call for attention.**

**b) Select the option that illustrates the task done by "she".**

task done by "she"

- A. Option (1)

B. Option (2)

C. Option (3)

D. Option (4)

Ans. B. Option (2)

1. Which of the following statements is true with reference to the lines given below.

i. “*In some shady haunt, / Among Arabian sands...*” – This vivid image evokes a sense of aridity and isolation, further emphasizing the impact of the girl’s song in such a harsh environment.

ii. “*Breaking the silence of the seas / Among the farthest Hebrides...*” – This image creates a sense of vastness and loneliness, highlighting the power of the girl’s voice to break through the stillness of the remote Hebrides.

a) Both i and ii

b) Only i

c) Only ii

d) Neither of the two

Ans: a) Both i and ii

## Short answer questions:

Q1. Discuss the girl’s song in the poem “The Solitary Reaper”.

Ans. The girl’s melancholy song fills the valley, captivating the poet. He compares her voice to the song of a nightingale and the cuckoo-bird, highlighting its sweetness and emotional depth. This emphasizes the power of music to evoke emotions and transcend language and understanding.

Q2. Describe the setting of the poem.

Ans. The poem “The Solitary Reaper” opens with a solitary Highland girl working in a vast valley. The poet is initially captivated by her grace and beauty as she harvests the grain.

Q3. How does the speaker describe the girl’s song? What emotions does it evoke in him?

Ans. The speaker describes the girl’s song as melancholic and hauntingly beautiful, surpassing anything he has ever heard. It evokes a range of emotions in him, including longing, joy, and wonder.

Q4. Who is the solitary reaper? Where does the poet encounter the solitary reaper?

Ans. The Highland girl is the solitary reaper. The poet encounters the solitary reaper in a field, nestled within a serene valley. This setting is further described as sunlit and golden, suggesting a sense of rural beauty and peace.

Q5. Briefly describe the imagery used to depict the girl and her surroundings.

Ans. The girl is depicted as single and graceful as she reaps the grain. The poet compares her movements to a dancer, highlighting her rhythmic and elegant work. The imagery also emphasizes her solitude in the vast landscape.

Q6. What is the poet’s initial impression of the reaper?

Ans. The speaker is immediately captivated by the reaper. He uses words like “single in the field,” “Yon solitary Highland Lass,” and “alone she cuts and binds the grain” to emphasize her isolation and independence. Despite the solitude, the speaker is clearly struck by her beauty and grace. He feels a sense of awe and wonder at her presence in the peaceful scenery.

**Q7. ‘Will no one tell me what she sings?’ Why does the poet ask this question? What, according to the speaker, might be the theme of the girl’s song?**

**Ans.** The English poet is not familiar with the language of the Scottish Highlanders. So, he cannot follow the meaning of the Highland girl’s song. That is why he asks this question. The poet tries to guess what the theme of the song could be. He imagines that the song perhaps tells the tale of some unhappy events of the past or of some battle that had been fought in the distant past. He also thinks that the song may be about some loss or pain.

**Q8. What is the main characteristic of the girl’s song?**

**Ans.** The main characteristic of the girl’s song is its melancholy beauty. The song evokes a sense of sadness, longing, and bittersweet joy. This is evident in phrases like “melancholy strain,” “plaintive numbers,” and the poet’s comparison of the song to “old, unhappy, far-off things.”

**Q9. How does the speaker compare the girl’s voice to other natural sounds?**

**Ans.** The poet compares the girl’s voice to various natural sounds:

Nightingale: The speaker says “No Nightingale did ever chaunt / More welcome notes...”

This comparison emphasizes the sweetness and melodious nature of the girl’s voice.

Cuckoo-bird: The line “A voice so thrilling ne’er was heard / In spring time from the Cuckoo-bird...” highlights the beauty and emotional depth of the girl’s song, suggesting it surpasses the joyful song of the cuckoo.

**Q10. Explain the significance of the phrase “plaintive numbers.”**

**Ans.** The phrase “plaintive numbers” refers to the sad and flowing quality of the girl’s song. It suggests a song with a simple, yet emotional tone that carries the weight of unspoken feelings. The word “numbers” emphasizes the rhythm and structure of the song, suggesting it is not simply a random cry of emotion, but a carefully crafted expression of longing and sadness. It is not just a melancholy song, but a deep emotion that draws the listener in and compels them to share in the singer’s experience.

**Q11. What imagery or metaphor is used to convey the song’s lasting impact?**

**Ans.** The poem uses the metaphor of music carried in the heart to convey the song’s lasting impact. This imagery suggests that the song’s emotional resonance transcends the physical act of hearing and becomes a part of the speaker’s inner world. He carries the melody and emotions within him, allowing them to continue to influence him long after the encounter.

## **Answer the following long answer questions:**

**Q1. What is the poet’s lament in the poem?**

**Ans.** Following are the poet’s lament in the poem ‘The Solitary Reaper’:

The solitary nature of the reaper: The image of the girl working alone in the vast landscape evokes a sense of isolation and loneliness.

The mystery of the song: The speaker’s inability to understand the meaning of the girl’s song creates a feeling of incompleteness and a desire to grasp its deeper significance.

The temporary nature of the experience: The speaker’s final statement about carrying the music in his heart “long after it was heard no more” suggests a sense of loss and the fading of a beautiful moment.

**Q2. Describe the speaker’s emotional response to the song.**

**Ans.** The speaker’s emotional response to the song is multifaceted and deeply felt:

Captivation: He is initially drawn in by the beauty and sweetness of the song, comparing it to the

nightingale and cuckoo.

**Awe and Wonder:** The speaker's stillness and attentiveness as he listens ("I listened, motionless and still") suggest a sense of reverence and wonderment at the power of the song. Melancholy and

**Longing:** The song's melancholic nature evokes a matching emotion in the speaker. He feels a sense of sadness and longing, possibly for the unknown past or the fleeting beauty of the moment.

**Deep emotional impact:** The final line, "The music in my heart I bore, / Long after it was heard no more," reveals the song's lasting impact. It leaves a profound mark on the speaker's soul, continuing to resonate even after the physical sound has faded.

### **Q3. Discuss the central theme of the poem.**

**Ans.** The central theme of the poem "The Solitary Reaper" is the profound power of beauty and music to touch the soul. The solitary reaper's song, despite its unknown meaning, evokes a range of emotions in the speaker, demonstrating the ability of art to connect us to our own humanity and the beauty of the world around us.

The ending reinforces this theme by emphasizing the lasting impact of the song. Even though the experience is temporary, the speaker carries the music within him, forever changed by its beauty and emotional power. This underscores the idea that art can leave a permanent mark on our lives, enriching our inner world and reminding us of the profound connections we can experience through beauty and music.

### **Q4. How does "The Solitary Reaper" reflect the Romantic ideals of beauty, nature, and emotion?**

**Ans.** "The Solitary Reaper" beautifully reflects several key Romantic ideals:

1. **Beauty in Simplicity:** The poem celebrates the beauty found in ordinary things, like a lone reaper working in a field. The speaker is captivated by the girl's grace and the simple melody of her song, demonstrating the Romantic belief that true beauty can be found in everyday life, not just grand spectacles.
2. **Nature as a Source of Inspiration:** The vast valley and golden sunlight create a serene setting that inspires the speaker and amplifies the emotional impact of the song. Nature is not just a backdrop but an active participant in the experience, reflecting the Romantic view of nature as a source of inspiration and emotional connection.
3. **Emphasis on Emotion:** The poem focuses heavily on the speaker's emotional response to the song. His feelings of wonder, longing, and sadness are central to the poem's message. This aligns with the Romantic emphasis on individual emotions and the power of art to evoke them.

Overall, "The Solitary Reaper" captures the essence of Romanticism by celebrating the beauty found in the ordinary, the power of nature to inspire, the importance of individual emotions, and the lasting impact of beauty.

### **Q5. Explain the meaning of the following phrases:**

- (a) melancholy strain
- (b) shady haunt
- (c) plaintive numbers
- (d) humble lay
- (e) welcome notes

**Ans.** (a) melancholy strain: The word "melancholy" emphasizes the sadness and longing associated with the reaper's song, while "strain" refers to the melody itself. This phrase sets the tone for the

poem, suggesting a sense of sorrow and longing in the air.

(b)     shady haunt: This phrase describes the solitary reaper's location, suggesting a hidden or peaceful spot away from the harshness of the open fields. It creates a contrast between the bustling world and the tranquility of the reaper's work.

(c)     plaintive numbers: The word "plaintive" emphasizes the sorrowful nature of the song, while "numbers" refers to its rhythm and melody. This phrase suggests a simple yet emotional song, adding depth and complexity to the reaper's music.

(d)     humble lay: This phrase contrasts with "plaintive numbers," suggesting a less complex and more ordinary song. It might be about personal sorrows, common experiences, or even nature.

(e)     welcome notes: This phrase describes how the speaker perceives the reaper's song. It suggests that despite its melancholic nature, the song brings him a sense of comfort and solace. This highlights the power of music to transcend sadness and offer beauty and peace.

**Q6. Describe the landscape and the reaper's position within it. How does this setting contribute to the poem's mood?**

**Ans.** The landscape of "The Solitary Reaper" is vast and serene, painted with golden sunlight and vastness. Wordsworth uses vivid imagery to create a sense of both beauty and isolation.

The Valley: Sunlit fields, golden grain, and a "vale profound" all contribute to a sense of spaciousness and peace. The valley can symbolize both abundance and isolation. The sun-drenched valley creates a sense of tranquility and harmony with nature.

The Reaper: Described as "single in the field," "solitary Highland Lass," and "alone she cuts and binds the grain," emphasizing her isolation within the vast landscape.

The reaper's solitude adds a touch of melancholy and mystery to the poem, inviting the reader to wonder about her thoughts and the story behind her song.

The interplay between the vast, sunlit valley and the solitary reaper creates a contrasting mood of both peace and melancholy. The beauty of the landscape underscores the reaper's isolation, adding a layer of depth and reflection to the poem. This setting sets the stage for the speaker's

encounter with the reaper's song, preparing the reader for a powerful and emotionally charged experience.

**Q7. Consider how the reaper's song serves as a bridge between the two individuals, despite the lack of physical interaction.**

**Ans.** The reaper's song in "The Solitary Reaper" serves as a powerful bridge between the speaker and the reaper, despite the lack of physical interaction. Here are some ways this connection is established:

1.       Emotional resonance: The speaker is deeply moved by the song, experiencing a range of emotions like sadness, longing, and wonder. This shared emotional response creates a bond between them, even though they don't speak to each other. The song transcends words and connects them on a deeper, emotional level.

2.       Shared experience: The song speaks of "old, unhappy, far-off things" and "some more humble lay," hinting at shared human experiences of loss, sorrow, and everyday life. This creates a

sense of empathy and understanding between the speaker and the reaper, despite their different circumstances.

3. Universal language of music: The song itself acts as a universal language that transcends individual differences. The speaker might not understand the specific words or stories, but the melody and emotions carried in the music bridge the gap between them.

In conclusion, the reaper's song serves as a powerful bridge between the speaker and the reaper. It transcends the limitations of language and physical interaction, forging a connection through shared emotions, universal experiences, and the power of music to resonate with the human soul.

#### **Q8. Critically appreciate the poem "The Solitary Reaper".**

**Ans.** William Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper" is a simple poem that leaves an impact on the reader. It transcends mere description of a scene, delving into themes of beauty, isolation, and the transformative power of art. The poem is divided into four eight-line stanzas, each with an ABAB CDCD rhyme scheme.

Wordsworth paints a breathtaking picture of the sunlit valley and the solitary reaper working amidst the golden grain. Words like "boundless fields," "sunlit slope," and "golden grain" evoke a sense of vastness and tranquility. The poem engages not just the visual sense but also the reader's imagination, making them feel like they're standing alongside the speaker, witnessing the scene unfold.

The speaker's ability to carry the music of the song in his heart long after the physical sound has faded ("The music in my heart I bore, / Long after it was heard no more") highlights the enduring impact of art. This suggests that true beauty and meaningful experiences leave a lasting mark on our souls, enriching our inner lives.

### **Reference to context:**

#### **Question 1:**

**"Behold her, single in the field, Yon solitary Highland Lass! Reaping and singing by herself; Stop here, or gently pass!"**

**Who is referred to as the "solitary Highland Lass"? What is she doing in the field?**

Answer: The "solitary Highland Lass" refers to a young Scottish girl who is reaping crops and singing by herself in a field.

**What does the poet ask the reader or traveler to do?**

Answer: The poet asks the reader or traveler to either stop and listen to her song or pass by quietly so as not to disturb her.

**What tone does the poet establish in these lines?**

Answer: The tone is one of admiration and wonder, as the poet marvels at the simplicity and beauty of the scene.

#### **Question 2:**

**"Will no one tell me what she sings? Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow For old, unhappy, far-off things, And battles long ago:"**

**What does the poet wonder about in these lines?**

Answer: The poet wonders about the meaning of the reaper's song and speculates that it might be about sorrowful events from the past or ancient battles.

**What literary device is used in “old, unhappy, far-off things”?**

Answer: The literary device used is alliteration, as seen in the repetition of the ‘h’ and ‘f’ sounds.

**How does the poet’s curiosity reflect his engagement with the song?**

Answer: The poet’s curiosity shows his deep emotional connection to the song, as he is moved by its beauty and longs to understand its meaning.

**Question 3:**

**"No Nightingale did ever chaunt More welcome notes to weary bands Of travellers in some shady haunt, Among Arabian sands:"**

**How does the poet compare the solitary reaper’s song to that of the nightingale?**

Answer: The poet compares the reaper’s song to the nightingale’s, suggesting that her song is even more welcoming and soothing to weary travelers than the nightingale’s notes in a shady desert oasis.

**What imagery is created by the phrase "shady haunt, among Arabian sands"?**

Answer: The imagery evokes a picture of a cool and refreshing resting place amidst the harsh, hot desert, emphasizing the comfort provided by the reaper’s song.

**What mood does the poet create through this description?**

Answer: The poet creates a mood of relief and solace, highlighting the emotional impact of the reaper’s melody.

**Question 4:**

**"The music in my heart I bore, Long after it was heard no more."**

**What does the poet mean by "The music in my heart I bore"?**

Answer: The poet means that the song of the solitary reaper left a lasting impression on him, staying in his heart and memory long after he had stopped hearing it.

**How does the poet reflect on the power of music in these lines?**

Answer: The poet reflects that music has the power to transcend time and space, leaving a deep emotional and spiritual impact that lingers long after the actual experience.

**What does the line "Long after it was heard no more" suggest about the poet's emotional connection to the reaper's song?**

Answer: It suggests that the poet was profoundly moved by the song, which continued to resonate within him, symbolizing the timeless nature of art and beauty.